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PROGRAM E-SPOTLIGHT

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U K R A I N E

Chernivtsi Hosts Fourth Municipal Office of Economic Development Meeting

On March 26-28, Chernivtsi hosted the fourth "Municipal Office of Economic Development (MOED) Meeting" an event organized within the framework of USAID's Local Economic Development (LED) project.



Head of the Chernivtsi Investment Promotion Department Volodymyr Pulynets and LED project staff member Tamara Saksonova examine a model depicting the expansion and modernization of Chernivtsi's airport.

With more than 70 representatives from 34 cities attending, along with representatives from InvestUkraine and several Oblast administrations, the event was significant because it gave one of our partner cities, Chernivtsi, an opportunity to present its accomplishments in detail and to show conference participants concrete developments in the city as a result of its cooperation with LED.

During the meeting, Dusan Kulka presented EU Opportunities and Challenges for Ukrainian municipalities. The Project unveiled its panorama tool, and a number of cities presented their activities in implementing their strategic plans. There was also discussion about regional planning efforts and about the relationship between the cities and the InvestUkraine Agency. Participants had a chance to view a land auction in Chernivtsi and to attend the city's Economic Development Leader Award Ceremony.

23 Leaders of Counter-Trafficking NGOs Certified in Social Work

On March 7, 23 leaders of NGOs from around Ukraine involved in counter-trafficking work, particularly the provision of reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking, were awarded Social Work Certificates by the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

NGO workers who provide assistance to victims of trafficking come from various backgrounds and professions and their practice has heretofore largely been based on a narrower set of experiences. In order to better equip them for their work, IOM partnered with SOCIUM-XXI NGO and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy to offer its NGO partners an opportunity to attend a vocational training course and obtain state Social Work Certificates.

The USAID-funded course titled "Innovations in Social Work," consisted of four week-long modules covering different aspects of social work, including theory, pertinent legal issues, methods, organizational issues, innovations, and ethics. The course culminated with a session at which the participants presented their social projects to the university evaluation commission.

With the anticipated licensing of social services in Ukraine, obtaining formal education in social work is crucial for the sustainability of NGOs working in anti-trafficking.

Financial and Economic Forum Discusses Medium-term Prospects of Budget Policy in Ukraine

The Institute for Budgetary and Socio-Economic Research (IBSER), with support from the USAID's Municipal Budget Reform (MBR) Project, held its Second Financial and Economic Forum on March 20, 2008. The main goal of the Forum was to analyze the objectives and tasks of Ukraine's budget policy for 2008-2009, and to identify how achieving these objectives will effect Ukrainians on a daily basis in the next three to five years. The Forum addressed the social aspects of budget policy; structural reforms; and budget mechanisms of regional development.



The forum served as an effective platform for discussing urgent budgetary and socio-economic issues among representatives of government, academia and international and local NGOs.

About 40 representatives from government, academia and local and international NGOs participated in the Forum along with 30 journalists.

IBSER will now prepare and disseminate appropriate recommendations made at the Forum among the interested parties.

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M O L D O V A

New Hepatitis B and C Communications Campaign Launched

USAID's Preventing HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B & C Project launched a new nationwide communication campaign on March 11 to help prevent the spread of hepatitis B and C in Moldova. The campaign, the first of its kind in Moldova, is entitled: Protect Yourself and Your Family from Viral Hepatitis B and C.

Viral hepatitis is the fifth leading cause of death in Moldova, and mortality rates are seven times higher than those in the EU. Yet, only 12% of Moldovans know about the modes of transmission of hepatitis B and C.

The campaign is designed to increase knowledge of hepatitis B and C, reduce high-risk behaviors that transmit these diseases, and promote the use of the six voluntary counseling and testing centers that were established with the support of USAID.



A public service campaign poster

Campaign activities will target the general population as well as specific groups such as youth, rural populations, migrants and people infected with viral hepatitis. The campaign will run for six months and include spots on national TV and radio stations.

Moldovan Government Takes Stand Against Domestic Violence

On March 11, the President of Moldova signed historic legislation to protect women in Moldova from domestic violence adopting. This legislation is a progressive step for a country in which over 40% of women have been victims of violent acts at least once in their lifetimes. The new law on domestic violence makes it much clearer that violence against women is a criminal offense and defines appropriate criminal punishments for perpetrators.

Two of USAID Moldova's partners, the Winrock Moldova Anti-Trafficking Initiative and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative in Moldova, provided key commentary and input during the draft phase to strengthen and improve the law. ABA also helped develop a legal representation program for domestic violence victims to assist with prosecution efforts and trained 35 judges and prosecutors on the new law. More training sessions are planned for 2008.

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BELARUS

CNFA and the Agrarian Information Consulting Center Organize Roundtable on Precision Agriculture

On February 29, the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs (CNFA) and the Belarus Agrarian Information Consulting Center sponsored a roundtable in Minsk addressing "Precision Agriculture Application Prospects in Belarus." The roundtable was organized to review work on the perspectives for precision agriculture in Belarus as accessed by Gregory Schwab, a CNFA-volunteer and U.S. soil specialist. A faculty member of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Kentucky, Dr. Schwab, visited a number of Belarusian farms

that had expressed an interest in applying precision agriculture in their own production through the Farmer-to-Farmer program funded by USAID and implemented by CNFA.

The overall goal of the program in Belarus is to increase the incomes of private farms and employees and to establish models of successful private enterprise. American volunteers promote modern production practices and transfer technical knowledge and the skills necessary to make educated and timely business decisions to their Belarusian counterparts.



During the round-table discussion

Dr. Schwab noted in his presentation that the application of precision agriculture techniques has already begun in Belarus. Now it is essential to establish the appropriate level of expediency in applying precision agriculture technologies during the current stage of Belarusian agricultural development. In addressing this point, Dr. Schwab advised to begin by developing more accurate field records, and doing field square, border, and soil nutrients mapping.

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